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RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001976

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS  
STATE FOR STAS  
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS  
HHS PASS TO NIH  
STATE PASS TO USAID  
OES/IHA SINGER  
PASS TO HHS/OGHA (STEIGER/HICKEY), CDC (BLOUNT/FARRELL) NIH/FIC  
(GLASS/MAMPILLY), FDA (LUMPKIN/WELSCH)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [AMED](#) [KSCA](#) [ECON](#) [TSPL](#) [TRGY](#) [TNGD](#) [EIND](#) [ENRG](#)  
KGHG, IN

SUBJECT: NEW DELHI BI-WEEKLY ESTH REPORT

REF A: New Delhi 0097

NEW DELHI 00001976 001.4 OF 002

11. Summary: This edition of the New Delhi ESTH report includes an update on the die-off of a critically endangered crocodilian species; EmbOffs meeting with a company that provides Greenhouse Gas (GHG) monitoring solutions in the building sector; biofuels; a shortage of scientists in GOI research labs; and a CDC program to assess the quality of HIV/AIDS national labs. End Summary.

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Update on Indian Gharial Mortality  
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12. Between December 2007 and March 2008, 111 gharials, a critically endangered crocodilian species endemic to India, have died in the Chambal River in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan (Ref A). The cause of death has been determined to be gout caused by ingestion of contaminated fish - most likely from the highly polluted Yamuna River which connects with the Chambal. The gout causes the gharials to lose mobility and the ability to thermoregulate resulting in death during the colder winter months. The work of Dr. Brian Stacey of the University of Florida was central to the determination of the cause of death according to WWF-India which heads the Gharial Crisis Management Group constituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to oversee the crisis. WWF-India has successfully tagged several gharials and will monitor their movements and activities for one year from their field station located at Etawah. Indian labs are still attempting to isolate the substance causing the contamination of river fish, which makeup the gharials diet, although mercury and cadmium, both present in the water, have been ruled out. While the death rate has fallen substantially since March, concerns remain that another mass die-off may occur with the coming of winter.

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Measuring GHGs in the Building Sector  
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13. EmbOffs met with officials from Ngenox Technologies - a

technology services company with expertise in computer systems used for building management. Ngenox officials showcased their recently developed software application tool designed to provide real-time measurement of GHG emissions from both business processes and buildings. The product, called Ecofice, allows for both automated data entry from remote mounted sensors as well as manual entry of mobile emission data from vehicle fleets. As a web-based tool, Ecofice can monitor, analyze, and forecast trends in GHG emissions in multiple facilities around the world from one location.

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Automakers Accelerate Bio-Diesel Projects  
GOI delays Bio-Fuel Plan  
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14. Automakers such as General Motors, Daimler Chrysler, and Mahindra and Mahindra, have accelerated their research activities in testing Jatropha based bio-diesel. The Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute (CSMCRI), situated in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, is a key partner for both Daimler Chrysler and GM. GM has tested six of its engines using Jatropha derived diesel at CSMCRI and plans to enter into an agreement with CSMCRI to farm Jatropha. Daimler Chrysler is in its fourth year of Jatropha research with CSMCRI. The GOI meanwhile has delayed the mid-July release of the National Bio-Fuel Policy due to internal discord between the Ministries of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Agriculture, Science and Technology, and the Planning Commission over whether an independent body should be established to oversee bio-fuels in India. MNRE has stated the GOI should create a National Bio-fuel Development Board while the Planning Commission has argued that if the policy framework is sound, such a board will not be necessary. The GOI has not provided a new date for the release of the National Bio-Fuel Policy.

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Shortage of Scientists in GOI Research Labs  
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15. Despite the three fold increase in the allocation for research and development in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, GOI research labs, including those of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Indian Space Research Organization, and Atomic Energy Agency, are all facing severe shortages in scientists at both the senior and entry levels. In a conversation with SciFSN, Dr. Vikram Kumar, Director of the National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi, lamented that due to the lack of experienced scientists, the lab was not able to move forward with several projects. Much of the shortage is due to the accelerated growth in the private sector as Indian and multinational companies set-up new research labs across the country. Typically, the corporate labs pay three to four times more than the government labs and Indian scientists are following the money. In order to mitigate the outflow, CSIR and DRDO have been authorized to pay higher salaries and hire scientists directly. Dr. Kumar noted the situation may improve with the implementation of the sixth pay commission report and new GOI rules and incentives for researchers designed to make public funded labs more attractive.

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CDC Assesses HIV/AIDS National Labs  
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16. At the request of the National Aids Control Organization (NACO), CDC has initiated an assessment of the quality of HIV/AIDS testing in 13 National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) throughout India. Training of assessors was completed on July 9 and three NRLs in Delhi were assessed over the following 3 days. Assessors and CDC staff are in the field through July 22 visiting other NRLs. The final report will be compiled, shared and discussed with NACO by July 28.

WHITE